

DEFENSE:

Now Rostow's Report

When Robert S. McNamara took over as Secretary of Defense, he found the armed forces operating on the basis of security policies laid down in 1953 by former President Eisenhower and the then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Arthur W. Radford. McNamara promptly wrote but a directive—"Prepare and draft a memorandum revising the basic national security policies and assumptions, including the assumptions relating to counter-force strikes and initiation of the use of tactical nuclear weapons"—and sent it along to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

What he wanted, in plain English, was nothing less than a new statement of the U.S. policy on defense of itself and its friends. The Joint Chiefs have never yet agreed on such a policy, because the Army, Navy, and Air Force have never been able to get together.

But they did write a fourteen-page paper on the subject, which is still pending before the National Security Council.

Top-Level Comments: Its State Department counterpart emerged last week. A book 2 inches thick, 285 pages triple spaced on legal-size paper, and bound in light-blue paper, was being circulated at the very top level of Defense and State Department officials for "comments." Six months in the works, it was written by Dr. Walt Whitman Rostow, former White House Defense aide and now Staff top planning officer.

Quoting literally from Winston Churchill, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, Rostow points out that the ultimate U.S. objective is a peaceful world in which every nation is free, can determine its own destiny, guarantee individual liberty and rights, and govern by consent of the people.

To accomplish all of this, Rostow out-

lines the Kennedy Administration's steadily evolving doctrine of selective striking power, nuclear and conventional, ranging upward from the merest "showing of the flag" from foreign port to the bombing of enemy installations before, during, and after any hostile action against the United States or its allies.

Army-Navy Views: As for the dispute between the Air Force and the Army and Navy, Rostow leans toward the Army and Navy view that effective nuclear striking power requires qualitative superiority but not massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Like the President (box, page 26), Rostow rejects the strategy of pre-emptive attack. This, he argues, could create uncertainty in the mind of a prospective enemy and the risk that he might miscalculate U.S. aims.

Soviet and Red Chinese efforts to nibble away at vulnerable areas, of the world, as in Laos or Korea, would be opposed, as now, by conventional and guerrilla forces. The U.S. aim, in such places, would be to encourage freedom and individual rights without attempting to make over other countries in the American image.

The State Department sent draft copies to the Pentagon and other top security agencies for "emendation and recommendations." Presumably, then, the document will be presented to the National Security Council sometime later in the spring. If this top-level seven-man group approves it, McNamara, then, will get his up-to-date blueprint for defense.

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